

REMARKS

The Examiner's action dated July 31, 2008, has been received, and its contents carefully noted.

In order to advance prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to provide a more detailed definition of the novel steam iron according to the present invention. While the amendment to claim 1 helps to further establish the patentability of the present invention, it is believed that the previous version of claim 1 already distinguished patentably over the prior art.

The prior art rejection presented in section 9 of the action is respectfully traversed for the reason that the novel iron defined in the application claims, and particularly in parent claim 1, is not disclosed in or suggested by any reasonable combination of the teachings of the applied references.

Specifically, the steam iron according to the present invention includes a part (8) having multiple functions that "constitutes at least in part the steam chamber (3) above the soleplate (2), the part having multiple functions further comprises a downwardly extending rib that limits the steam chamber laterally and the iron further comprises at least one joint forming a seal between the rib and the soleplate." (underlining added)

The amendment to claim 1 now further establishes that the claimed steam chamber is bounded by both a heating body and the downwardly extending ribs of the part having multiple functions.

Support for the amendments to claim 1 will be found in the specification at page 5, lines 5-10 and line 28.

It is believed that the explanation of the rejection of the pending claims contains two significant errors relating to what is actually disclosed in the applied references:

Firstly, in the second paragraph of section 9 of the action, the examiner identifies plate 77 shown in Figure 15 of Cuzel as a heating soleplate. This is clearly incorrect. Cuzel discloses, quite clearly, at column 8, lines 44-51, that element 77 is simply a plate that is used in combination with a vacuum bell 76 for assembly of half-shells 11 and 12. Plate 77 forms no part of an iron and certainly is not a heating soleplate;

Secondly, in the explanation of the rejection it is alleged that chamber 29 of Cuzel contains "water or steam". According to the Cuzel disclosure, chamber 29 is a reservoir from which water is supplied to a steam chamber. There is nothing in the Cuzel reference that could possibly suggest to those skilled in the art that reservoir 29 will contain steam and it is universally recognized in the art that steam is not produced in the reservoir of a steam iron.

As already stated in previous responses, Cuzel does not illustrate either a steam chamber or a soleplate.

With respect to the secondary reference, Eckert, the examiner refers to a plastic skirt 56, shown in Figure 3 of that reference, forming the top of a steam extraction channel and the examiner asserts that the plastic skirt has a downwardly extending rib that limits the steam chamber laterally.

This assertion appears to somehow confuse a steam chamber with a steam extraction channel. In the Eckert patent, the steam chamber is identified by reference numeral 30, while the steam extraction channel is identified by

reference numeral 40 and is clearly located above the steam chamber. Steam is produced only in steam chamber 30 and, after having been produced, flows through extraction channel 40.

The term "steam chamber" has a definite, universally understood, meaning in this art: it is a chamber in which steam is produced. This is the interpretation that must be given to the recitation of a "steam chamber" in the claims of the present application. In any event, claim 1 now further defines a heating body having an upper face constituting a heating wall of the steam chamber. The heating body disclosed in the Eckert reference cannot be considered to be a heating wall of steam extraction channel 40.

Moreover, contrary to the assertion presented in the explanation of the rejection, plastic skirt 56 does not have any physical association with steam chamber 30, and does not even limit steam extraction channel 40 laterally. The vertically extending portions of skirt 56 are located around a gasket 48 that itself limits the steam extraction channel (and not the steam chamber) laterally.

In addition, with regard to the statement appearing in the last line on page 6 and the first two lines on page 7 of that action, it should be abundantly apparent that gasket 48 is not associated with soleplate 24.

It is submitted that since skirt 56 and gasket 48 of Eckert are associated with a steam extraction channel and are not physically associated with steam chamber 30, one skilled in the art could not find in this reference any suggestion for modifying the iron disclosed by Cuzel to associate ribs and a joint with a soleplate.

It must be reiterated that a reservoir, in particularly reservoir 29 of Cuzel, contains water and there

is no disclosure in either of the applied references that a reservoir, which is intended to supply water to a steam chamber, would itself contain steam. Even if the reservoir were to contain steam, this does not justify equating a reservoir to a steam chamber. A steam chamber is a container in which steam is produced; steam is not produced in a reservoir. It might additionally be noted that Cuzel explicitly states, at column 7, lines 17-23, that the only function of the reservoir is to supply water to a steam chamber. Since the reference also states that the steam chamber is not shown, it is clear that this chamber is separate from the reservoir.

As concerns the issue of modifying the structure of Cuzel in accordance with teachings of Eckert, it is submitted that the only modification that could possibly occur to those skilled in the art would involve the provision of a steam chamber that is limited laterally by parts, such as wall 33, that are integral with soleplate 24 and that extend upwardly from the soleplate. In any event, one skilled in the art could not possibly extract from the Eckert disclosure any idea to use the skirt 56 of that reference to limit steam chamber 30 laterally.

In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn, that the pending claims be allowed and that the application be found in allowable condition.

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If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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